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Education Issue

POST-SEMINARY THOUGHTS

Recollection of Things Past

Michael Novak

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN BRITAIN

Michael P. Fogarty

THE CITADEL OF PROSE

John P. Sisk

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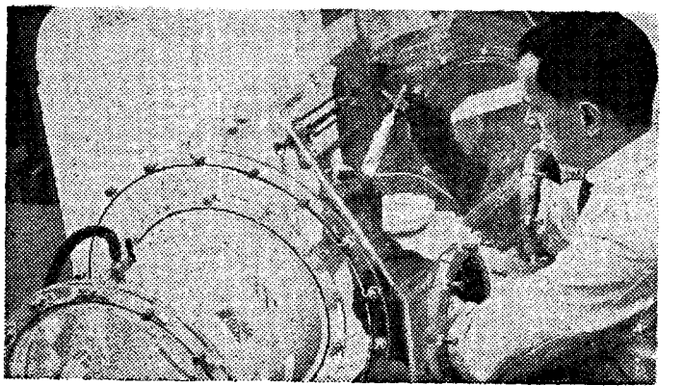

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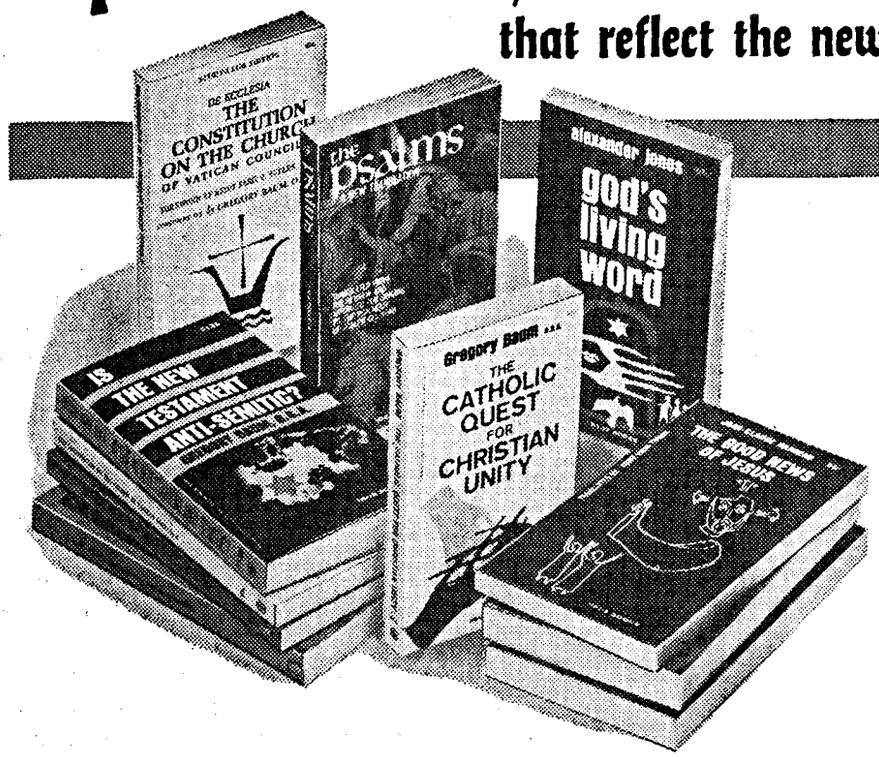

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CORRESPONDENCE

"Post-Tribal Worship"

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I would like to answer objections to my article on the liturgy ["Post-Tribal Worship," Aug. 20]. To Brother Kuhns I can only say that many of the "tedious but necessary qualifications," the absence of which he considers so compromising to my position, were the victim of a necessary but drastic reduction in the length of my article, made to acommodate COMMONWEAL's limitations of space. The ideas may have been "presented" hastily, but right or wrong, they were most assuredly not the product of hasty thought.

As to Father Kirtland's letter, it affords a most interesting corroboration of the validity of my position. It manifests some characteristic limitations in our present modes of liturgical thinking: 1) an unhistorical *fixism* on the subject of tradition. Father Kirtland seems to consider the past as some sort of unchanging mineral deposit, a kind of ever-present lode to be used in any age in the same function. He says—with no very startling originality—that "every generation stands on the shoulders of the past." I don't suppose I could call this "glib, and hasty, and superficial," but I would point out that we do *not* stand on the shoulders of the past: we *are* the past, living it in ever new amalgams in the *present* mode.

The example from the Cathedrals is very telling: Chartres, Bourges, and Rheims are important to us as great art, significant monuments of and to the past, and precisely *not* as embodiments of living liturgy and contemporary Christianity. Even our artistic and historian's appreciation of them is that of twentieth-century man, a very different response from that of the thirteenth century. He calls the historical moment a "cumulative reality, carrying with it the substance of the past through the present and on into the future." What he should notice is that this "substance" (interesting word here) is not carried as something fixed, unchanging, self-consistent, "univocal." It is an energy of awareness which shapes not only the present and future but *itself;* 2) another limitation obvious in Father Kirtland's remarks is the *dichotomous thinking of the past* (subjective-objective, individual-society, etc). I should think we have learned since Descartes to know better. Man's being, and by that I mean existence-being, is never *object,* except in the unreal cerebrations of rationalist philosophy. This sort of thinking was precisely what I was talking about and the reason I carefully avoided using the related word, "subjective."

To return, then, to the more accurate idea of an "Age of the Person," I agree that this phenomenon made its first appearance "roughly four hundred years ago," as a religious, almost prophetic intimation of what was to come intellectually and socially centuries later. But only in the last few generations has it become a reflective, psychological phenomenon, a psychic determinant of man's sense of direction. The "subjective-objective" in man can never be "complemented" or harmonized in any way, because that is an inadequate way of looking at man. So is the dichotomy of individual-society. What I was talking about was a society in which "individuals" would be related to each other *not* by what they had in "common," but by what was *unique* in each. And I categorically deny that "the family meal about the common table is not the time to pursue" these unique relationships.

This is not an attack upon family or community—any more than it is a criticism of the present reform of the liturgy. It is all a question of how one *understands* community realities. For this reason—and again Father Kirtland misses the point—I made no distinction between Gallican or medieval liturgical elements and those of "Roman provenance." It is *all* the liturgy of the past, civilized or not.

In short, Father Kirtland has misconceived his evaluation of my article because he reasons from precisely those thought-categories which it was my intention to identify and to challenge.

(REV.) JOHN J. RYAN

"The Secular City"

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Mr. Callahan's appraisal of Cox's *Secular City* and statement of his own position [Sept. 17] showed a lack of theological acumen. First, he failed to point out Cox's demythologized Christianity which is tantamount to a denial of the hereafter and hardly distinguishable from atheistic humanitarianism. Leave out the Christian terms, and the Secular City is no different from Johnson's Great Society. Callahan should have at least dealt with the three crucial questions posed on page 110 of the book where Dr. Cox asserts *Jesus* to be the Kingdom of God, reduces repentance to a rejection of previous values and an openness to new ones, and denies an otherworldly kingdom.

Secondly, Mr. Callahan has not made up his own mind about four theological issues. 1) He has not taken a theological position on the relation between the humanization of life on earth and its transformation with the Second Coming by Divine Power. (Does he follow Chardin, Congar or Bouyer who give the three alternatives?) 2) He has not clarified his understanding of the motive force behind charity in this world. He has to ask himself if the greatest commandment is *the* motive for the second, and if *agape* only can sublimate *eros* in the individual's endeavor to go about doing good in the secular city. 3) He left out any consideration of the primacy of adoration. He gave the impression, in fact, that anyone preoccupied with adoration is a hermit in the desert, that is, useless; and that such a religious beatnik is *necessarily* socially irresponsible. 4) He has not faced the fact that the believer's first mission is to "herald" faith in the after-life even if this makes no sense to the atheist or agnostic. He may not water down *supernatural* traditions to suit the worldlings.

Mr. Callahan has two problems. First

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of all, he cannot stand a redemptive religion based on dualism: Creator and creature, Savior and saved, this age and the age to come, grace and free will, old Adam and new Adam, spirit and flesh. Does he want monism which is atheism? In the second place, he wants modern man to listen to the kerygma even if it means talking about it on his own terms. Well, as Dr. Pelikan said at Chicago's Liturgical convention, the Christian's responsibility is to be faithful, not successful.

(REV.) SERGIUS WROBLEWSKI, O.F.M.

Reply

When I wrote "The Secular City" I took it for granted that someone would put the many possible objections into a machinegun cartridge belt and fire away. I commend Father Wroblewski for thinking up so many and compressing them into a relatively short letter. Have any of his bullets hit the mark? Well, of course I'd be the last person to admit it, but some come reasonably close.

Father Wroblewski is right in suggesting that I have not made up my mind on the "four theological issues" he raises. I guess I'm supposed to feel embarrassed about that, but I just don't. They seem to me immensely complicated problems, the kind it takes a lifetime to work out.

I don't "follow" Chardin, Congar *or* Bouyer (nor do I think there are only three alternatives). Each of them seems to me to have something of value to say, but then so do Rahner, Bonhoeffer, Johannes Metz, Paul Van Buren and Daniélou. In any event, I did not imply or say that a person preoccupied with adoration is *"necessarily* socially irresponsible." Some will be called to that vocation by God, but the majority of men will not. And nothing I have read in Chardin, Congar—or anyone of "theological acumen"— would lead me to think that "the believer's first mission is to 'herald' faith in the after-life." I take it the believer's first mission is to "herald" *Christ*, from whom all good things, including the "after-life" (a hor-

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THE POPE AT THE U.N.

By the standards of Broadway, Pope Paul's visit to the United Nations on October 4 has all the earmarks of a spectacular show. The preparations have been on a massive scale: the largest police contingent in the history of New York; an unparalleled demand for tickets to the papal Mass at Yankee Stadium; a reported black market in press passes; a motor caravan which will traverse almost the whole length of Manhattan; a meeting between the Pope and President Johnson and a papal address to the U.N. New York is fairly blasé about distinguished visitors, but not this time.

Why the excitement? For New York Catholics, the reason is obvious enough. For probably the first and last time in their lives, thousands of Catholics will at least catch a glimpse of a living pope. For non-Catholics, curiosity is probably the strongest impulse. Whatever past and present suspicions there may be of Roman power, pomp and pretensions, the Church and the Pope remain objects of intense public interest; and all the more so since the beginning of Vatican II. Yet the interest in the Pope's visit is not limited to Catholic piety and non-Catholic curiosity. Whatever its weaknesses, the United Nations remains as one of the few important world organizations, representing mankind's aspirations for peace and unity. An address by a pope to this organization brings together, then, two of the great world forces.

But does an encounter of this kind have any meaning beyond that of a Broadway spectacular? Dr. G. Elson Ruff, editor of the bi-weekly *Lutheran*, wrote in the September 29 issue of that magazine that he "can't imagine what Pope Paul may say at the United Nations assembly that will be worth the price of an airplane ticket from Rome." Whatever the Pope says, he added, will have "no relevance to the rough power struggles that are the reality of world politics." This is a harsh estimate, and should one ask how many votes or political positions a papal address will change, the answer

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is probably "none at all." That is not the point, though. What matters is that the Pope, speaking in the name of the Church, show that world peace is at the center of the Christian's work and aspirations. All the Pope can reasonably hope for is to make this concern visible and direct, expecting no miracles but resting secure in the belief that one must begin with an aspiration.

Pope Paul has frequently and passionately asked for world peace. It is more a measure of the plight of man than of the inadequacies of the papacy that these pleas so often fall on deaf ears. Within the Church we may complain about Pope Paul on occasion, we may complain that the voice of the Church is ineffective, we may complain that Catholics seem as indifferent to peace as everyone else. But at the same time we have to recognize that the problem of peace is one which far transcends the strengths or weaknesses of any one human community—whether it be a Church, a nation or a grouping of nations. World peace will come about when and only when enough human communities see the utter stupidity and wastefulness of war and create effective international controls for the preservation of peace. That is to ask for a great deal, of course.

Yet what is a pope for if not to urge, plead and beg men to turn their eyes in the direction of peace? To place before them the needs and hopes of all men? To ask mankind to transcend its divisions, its bloodshed, its murderous factions and ideologies? Perhaps it is an index of our times that some will see in the Pope's visit nothing more than an attempt to divert the eyes of the world from the Council, or interpret it as a mere publicity stunt, or write it off as a meaningless gesture. There is a speculation to suit every taste, and the hoopla of the Pope's itinerary easily lends itself to snickers.

Let those snicker who will. For our part, we are glad the Pope is coming to New York and the U.N. If he can succeed only in bringing some Catholics to take the U.N. more seriously, he will have accomplished much. If he can, just for a moment, place the cause of peace directly before the eyes of the world, his trip will have been well worth it.

NO ANSWER YET

Garcia Godoy is in, Wessin y Wessin is out, Santo Domingo is quiet, and thanks to the OAS mediating team and the diplomacy of Ellsworth Bunker, the Dominican Republic is momentarily headed for free elections. Of course, the final day of reckoning between constitutional government and the Dominican military is yet to come; and not until it does will the future of free and popular government in that troubled nation be assured.

But the pause in Dominican affairs has had one surprising result. A foreign policy debate took place in the U.S. Senate. On September 15 Mr. Fulbright made his frontal attack on the Dominican intervention by charging that the government was initially overly timid in not supporting the constitutional rebellion, was subsequently panicked by an excessive and unfounded fear of Communist takeover, and was throughout deficient in candor about its actions.

This speech was answered the next day by Senator Thomas Dodd who unfortunately muddied a factual presentation with remarks about Fulbright's "strange confusion concerning the real nature of Communism." Senator Dodd had some valuable comments but also some strange confusions of his own. The fact that there are, and have been for some years, Communist organizations in the Dominican Republic; the fact that 3, 55, or 77 Communists (the numbers changed as government agencies had more time to search) participated in the rebellion; and the fact that Communist influence in the rebel sector was noted *after* the U.S. intervention, still do not add up to Communist control of the original rebellion.

Dodd further argued that the outcome of the intervention proves that the U.S. would never have supported a "right-wing dictatorship as an answer to the Communist threat." He forgets that the eventual direction of U.S. policy was obviously affected by the criticism which the intervention received, at home and overseas, and that today's happy ending was purchased dearly in lives and good will. As the Washington *Post* aptly commented, "to argue that all's well that ends well in the Dominican Republic is like insisting that because a broken leg ultimately heals it somehow is good for you."

Following Mr. Dodd's appearance, the debate dribbled on through a few more days. Senator Long from Louisiana attacked Castro, de Gaulle, Castro again, and General P. G. T. Beauregard (for not moving decisively at the Battle of Shiloh). Senator Smathers of Florida thanked God twice for our intervention; Senator Long thanked Him once. Senator Mundt of Indiana found sending the Marines "very wise and prudent and proper"; but in regard to the removal of Wessin y Wessin from Santo Domingo under American pressure, Mundt expressed some doubt as to whether we should "inject ourselves in that fashion and that forcefully into the internal affairs of another country."

A few senators, like Clark, Aiken, and Mansfield, clearly knew what they were about when they took the

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floor to comment on the Fulbright address. But generally the debate was saddening. Underlying Fulbright's entire speech had been essentially one question: If we so over-react to the presence of those Communists who will inevitably accompany almost every Latin American revolution, can the U.S. hope ever to do anything but support oligarchies and military dictatorships? As the Dominican Republic debate petered out amid refrains of "Castro" and "look at Cuba," that question was still unanswered.

RIGHT TO SAY NO?

During World War II, there were so few Catholic conscientious objectors to military service that the examiners usually seemed to assume that those few were faking. Many a Catholic CO has a hair-raising tale of how his skeptical examiner consulted some chancery office or other and thereupon announced the discovery that no Catholic could possibly object to performing military service.

This recurrent mistake was reframed for the Fathers of the Vatican Council recently by Cardinal Spellman. Though the full text of what the Cardinal actually said on the subject is not yet available, he has been quoted by various news services in terms that seem clear enough. "'Military service certainly can be made obligatory,' Cardinal Spellman said, 'and it should be made clear that individuals cannot refuse to do this service.'" (UPI report). "'In such cases,' he said, 'the individual cannot arrogate to himself the right to accept or to refuse obedience.'" (RNS report). "He said clarification (in Schema 13) is needed to state that military service is obligatory." (NC report).

It must be admitted that the news stories are just vague enough to open an alternate explanation: that the Cardinal was merely defending the right of a state to raise a conscript army in time of peril, or its right to exact some sort of non-combat service from conscientious objectors. As unlikely as this interpretation may be, at least it would explain away what seems to be such a puzzling attempt to deny the long Catholic tradition of conscientious objection.

The tradition is rooted in the same respect for conscience that the Cardinal defended in an earlier statement on religious liberty. The same respect for conscience, even for what one might regard as an objectively erroneous conscience, has been part of the Christian thinking on war from the beginning.

Perhaps Cardinal Spellman, as head of the military ordinariate for U.S. armed forces, is concerned about the rising rate of conscientious objection among American Catholics. The reason may be the "new" argument for conscientious objection: that in our nuclear age, the conditions for a just war no longer exist. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the right of conscientious objection must be underlined with new force. As Msgr. George Higgins wrote recently in his syndicated column, ". . . it must be said that the principle of conscientious objection is not only basically sound but, given the nature of modern warfare and the inevitable power of modern governments, ought to be defended more vigorously today than ever before in human history." Toward this same end, the Catholic Peace Fellowship is circulating a new booklet called "Can a Catholic Be a Conscientious Objector?" On the cover is a strong quote in the affirmative by Father William R. O'Connor, winner of the first Cardinal Spellman Award for theology.

KEEPING THE CONSENSUS

Since the crises of last summer, when U.S. Vietnam policy was still pretty much up in the air, little that is new has been added to the arguments. A policy has been painfully arrived at and the internal rhythms of the country, so to speak, have regularized. In appointing Arthur Goldberg U.N. ambassador, President Johnson in effect acknowledged that the consensus in the making during last spring and early summer pointed to a negotiated settlement.

Reinforcing this conclusion are the recent statements of five U.S. Senators – including Sen. Henry Jackson (Dem. Wash.), one of the staunchest advocates on Capital Hill of a "hard-line" – reporting their mail running between five to one and 20 to one against greater U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

The feeling of the country is particularly important right now, and will be for the next few months when the temptation is strong once again to reverse our policy from negotiations to an all-out win. The military in Vietnam believes that with the commitment of American ground troops we are now beginning to win the war. Apparently Ambassador Lodge shares their optimism, though on what grounds it is hard to tell. We have won only one engagement that could properly be called a battle, and nobody has yet said it had any strategic importance. Instead, by pouring vast amounts of men and materiel into the maneuver, we have only proved that it was a special situation. It was an exception rather than the rule, and even in the simple Pentagon terms of cost-efficiency a war cannot be won by exceptions. And

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this doesn't begin to answer the question of what such a victory would mean for the country and people of Vietnam.

The process of induction, by which an event on the tactical level quickly escalates to strategic and policy-level significance, is possibly the most consistent aspect of our Vietnam involvement. Seeing final victory in the outcome of a minor battle is only one of a long series of such exercises by our military. But Ambassador Lodge's recent antics, paralleling some of the funny-money talk of Richard Nixon on Vietnam, must surely be a parody. Maybe it is a sickness peculiar to the region, a sort of Saigon Syndrome. In any case, he was reported to have objected to Ambassador Goldberg's address before the U.N. in which he expressed the U.S.'s "willingness to enter into peaceful discussions" on the war.

It was not so long ago that the people now arguing against negotiations because we seem to be winning, argued most strenuously against them because we seemed to be losing. This argument is cyclical and avoids asking important questions about what our goals are, and what is the least costly way of attaining them. It is on these grounds that the merits of negotiations must be decided.

Certainly there are few illusions left about the prospects of creating a democratic Vietnam out of the present chaos. A military victory would only plough the country into deeper misery. There seems little doubt that President Johnson would be happy enough to achieve the containment of Chinese military power; yet further U.S. involvement has only the effect of enhancing China's prestige and pressing Hanoi deeper into its embrace. If we would beat China, it is better that we fight her directly; if it is containment we want, then the conference table is where we will find it.

NEWS & VIEWS

GRADUATE SPEED-UP

The Graduate Faculties of Columbia University have instituted a new tuition plan, designed to encourage students "not to dawdle" on their graduate degrees.

Under the new plan, students will pay a flat fee of $720 for one term of full-time study (one residence unit), and $480 for each term of part-time study. If the student does not complete all requirements, including dissertation, within the prescribed number of residence units (two units for the M.A., six for the Ph.D.), he will pay an "extended residence fee" of $360 per term until he does. (At the present time a student pays $48 per point until he has completed course requirements; thereafter, he pays a research fee of $50 per semester.)

Under the new plan, not only will students be encouraged to move quickly toward their doctorates (Columbia already has a seven-year maximum on time allowed), but those students who do not complete their degrees in the minimum amount of time will be subjected to rather harsh economic penalties. The arithmetic is simple. If Columbia had, say, raised its tuition fee from $48 to $60 per credit (an increase more than 90% higher than that scheduled for any other division of the University), it would have cost the graduate student $4620 to complete his degree in three years (the minimum time), and $5020 to do it in seven. Under the new plan it will cost him only $4320 to complete it in three years—but $7200 if he takes the full seven. It is this punitive element which is novel.

When one looks at the Bulletin of the Graduate Faculties of Columbia, one finds that most of the renowned teachers and scholars were, in fact, "dawdlers." Vice President Lawrence H. Chamberlain took 15 years to secure his Ph.D. Lionel Trilling took 13, Robert Brustein 9, Meyer Schapiro 12, Richard E. Neustadt 12, and Lewis Leary, Chairman of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, who, when queried about the new tuition plan, said "We think it is a very good thing," 13. One reason why such men may have needed more than three years—or seven—is that in the humanities and the social sciences, the significant discoveries come most often as the result of those questions which arise unexpectedly during the course of one's studies. The new tuition scale can be expected to create a context in which students will teach themselves not to ask the more difficult questions. Dean Sullivan told me that the "good student" would "do the dissertation now and ask the questions later."

This is just one symptom of the priority being given to speed and production quotas, and it could have profound ramifications. As Paul Goodman has noted, writing about what happened at Berkeley, "the labor of intelligent youth *is* needed and they are accordingly subjected to tight scheduling, speedup, and other factory methods. Then it is not surprising if they organize their own CIO. It is frivolous to tell them to go elsewhere if they don't like the rules, for they have no choice but to go to college, and one factory is like another."

JAY NEUGEBOREN

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POST-SEMINARY THOUGHTS

Seminaries operate on the presumptions of another age

MICHAEL NOVAK

Twelve and a half years of my life were spent, very happily, in a seminary. When I left from Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C. "to return to the world," I was twenty-six—having lived in the seminary almost as long as I had lived in the world. It is not surprising that today certain critics deny me the right to speak for the layman, and others the right to speak for the seminaries. Long ago it occurred to me that I could speak only for myself.

It might be useful, however, to suggest the poignancy of those first few months "out in the world," which taught me several things about the seminary. I am sometimes embarrassed to recall my naïveté. To have one's adolescence suddenly restored at twenty-six, however, and to be in New York, and free, was more than enough compensation for the discomforts of a half-recognized immaturity. My friends of those days seemed to understand; they led me rather gently into New York life: cocktail parties (forgetting to instruct me that "7 p.m." means eight), editorial offices, and various circles of friends. One good-humored girl, the cousin of a friend, saw me through my first awkward dates.

The point which struck home is that nearly everyone seemed to take for granted that "ex-seminarian" means "immature," and everyone treated me accordingly. I'm still grateful for their tolerance during those days.

MICHAEL NOVAK, *author of* The New Generation (*Herder & Herder*) *and* The Open Church (*Macmillan*), *is an assistant professor of religion at Stanford.*

It often occurred to me, moreover, that in another six months I would have been a priest. How long would it have taken these same people to accept me as mature? They would have deferred to my collar, of course, but to how much of what I had to say would they have credited good sense? It has since become clear to me that most people are so glad to see in a priest signs of intelligence, a desire to communicate, and a knowledge about contemporary culture, that much is forgiven any priest who manifests them. Even a theological conservative, if he is well-read and willing to converse, will stand out from many other priests and even appear to be marvelously avant-garde. The Catholic people treat their clergy with a marked gentleness.

Until the last three years of my seminary life, through whatever difficulties, it did not seriously occur to me that I would not become a priest. There was no reason to think insurmountable questions would arise as, it turned out, they did. Consequently, I was thinking about the reform and renewal required in the seminary on the supposition that I would later, as one among the Holy Cross Fathers, be responsible for helping to realize them "from within." We had many good and lengthy discussions in those days, and the intellectual energy which flowed from *Collegio di Santa Croce* in Rome and Holy Cross College in Washington met, and sometimes sparked, similar energy in other houses.

Even today, however, when the question of reforming the seminaries is no longer new, the laborers for reform are not too many, nor are serious ideas yet in

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abundance. On the contrary, although the Council seems to have changed dramatically the proportion of "progressives" in the seminaries, few who seriously care about the issue would say that everything necessary has already been said or that some contributors to the discussion are to cease functioning because they are no longer "in" the seminary. To be blunt, ex-seminarians have had to make the battering transition from seminary to secular world at some little cost. A high proportion of them, in fact, seem permanently unable to make the transition—one comes to dread meeting other ex-seminarians, so many of whom may not have been able to adjust. Those who have more or less successfully crossed the gap which yawns between the seminary and the secular world, however, though they no longer have a right to make institutional decisions, may have some little insight and interpretation to contribute.

Social Impact

There is, of course, plenty of fun in the seminary and plenty of *camaraderie.* The athletics played there, operating among other things as an outlet for sexual energy, are fierce and competitive. The faculty always has its complement of amiable, warm, well-disposed men. Some of them are also extraordinarily competent in their field of studies. Probably nowhere on earth are there houses where so much goodwill, dedication, and youthful energy are stored under one roof. The critics of the seminaries, however, raise two basic questions. A hundred men living poorly, chastely, obediently ought to be able to revolutionize an entire city; why do our present seminaries—sometimes ten or twelve of them in one city—lead to such little social or cultural change? Secondly, are there means of getting more priestliness from all the goodwill, dedication, and youth fed into the present system? The aim is not to destroy, but to fulfill, the purposes of the seminary system.

In the first place, the seminary needs to have more psychological ties to the secular world. Today events take place so rapidly that old words soon lose their meaning, new attitudes gain ground, original insights occur. No one can communicate successfully to people whose style of life—imagination, sentiments, concrete desires and fears, cast of mind—he cannot understand. Preachers of the Word cannot afford to be out of touch with a world of the spirit that is no longer the same at the end of a five-year period as it was at its beginning.

Secondly, within the seminary young men have to grow emotionally year by year. Growth best occurs through the assumption of responsibility. It is impossible to "form" a conscience; or, rather, such formation is only psychological conditioning. For conscience to grow, the personal appropriation of insights, of critical judgments, and of the responsibility for decision-making must occur with increasing frequency. Otherwise, conscience is merely placed in incubation.

Thirdly, the relationship between superior, faculty and students must be evangelical rather than eighteenth-century Jansenist in spirit. More reckless critics will suggest that all spiritual books written between Bossuet and Thérèse of Lisieux be gathered in a pile and set ablaze with the new flame in the next occurring Paschaltide. Less dramatic critics will only suggest that obedience is not to be conceived in feudal but in evangelical terms. The language of "superiors" and "subjects," at present in use nowhere but in Catholicism, is misleading because it disguises the fact that unity of will is the essential note in Christian obedience, and that the methods for attaining unity of will are many and flexible. Obedience is indispensable to the Church. But the style of obedience ought to change with every lesson history teaches us concerning the methods of obtaining unity of wills. The Holy Spirit teaches us through history. It may be more important to be docile to Him than to the writers of those cramping, misguided spiritual books which gave St. Thérèse, and give many others, headaches.

This point requires elaboration. One of the chief characteristics of seminary life is the almost indiscernible but ever-present threat which places immense psychological power in the hand of the superior. He can refuse to ordain, and the seminarians know that. Consequently, many early begin a lifelong habit of "biding their time." They will become reformers when they get into a position of authority; meanwhile, they will keep their noses clean. They make themselves as untroublesome as possible in the eyes of authority. Thus psychological rewards go to the docile, the reliable, the orderly. "The perfect seminarian" can be a cipher, with talent, an affable manner, and an inoffensive piety.

Tanquerey remarks somewhere in his heavy, damning tomes that persons of passion and imagination are badly suited to clerical life and will succeed in it only with difficulty. His observation is not totally correct, but even so it diagnoses the pathology of the seminary, which sometimes makes the spirited, healthy person feel that he is out of step, and comforts the mere conformist.

In brief, no one could criticize the seminaries more effectively than has been done unintentionally by writers of certain books on "the seminary rule," "religious perfection," "meditations for priests." The values presented

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in such books are seldom humanistic, let alone Christian. The change in spiritual atmosphere brought about by a change in basic books already characterizes a great number of seminaries, and will continue to bring about many adjustments within seminaries.

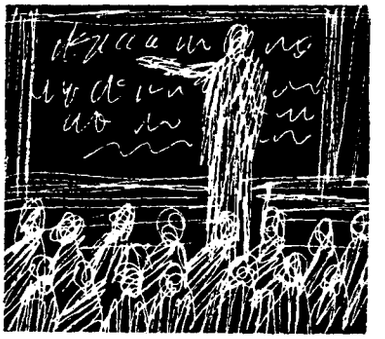
One of the most fundamental needs of the seminaries, particularly if the Council agrees to regional supervision of the seminary system, is a heightened consciousness of the fact that American clergy are different from any other clergy, French, Italian, or Irish. Many things are presently done in American seminaries which the theology and canons of seminary life do not yet justify —watching football games by the hour on television for example; or having recreation long after night prayer in spite of the "grand silence," or having parties with quantities of ice cream, soda pop, and baked goods that would astonish spiritual writers of two generations ago. Everybody involved knows that such changes are somehow justified; but no one has yet written the theory that justifies them. The cars American priests drive, their nice clothes and watches, their golfing and favorite restaurants, and their vacations fall into the same category. These are realities not written of in books. American clerical life is at least as sound as that in other countries, but its differences have never even been thoroughly described.

Mortification and Money

"Mortification," for example, is an artificial and often abandoned ritual for many American clerics. But one reason is that the American people are in some ways one of the most "mortified" that ever lived. Our lives are run by a clock, and the pace of our cities is inhuman. Many of our men have ulcers. Our women must develop two or three times more talents than their grandmothers exercised. Life in less "modern" countries like Italy is leisurely; people there know how to relax; they may need artificial mortifications. Americans have mortification built into the schedules they try to follow; if their spirits are to be freed for prayer, they need peace and rest.

Nor does money have the same meaning in an affluent society as in a poorer society. Many Americans handle money so quickly that they manifest little of the grasp-ingness or closeness which people in some other cultures are obliged to manifest. The spirit of poverty of the American priests one meets in Europe compares favorably with that of other groups of clergy there, though it is clearly different in style. American priests also have a relatively relaxed, familiar attitude toward the business world and the entertainment world in general, more at least than some other nationals. Many of the burdens under which American priests suffer are due to a failure to grasp thoroughly the evangelical advantages and disadvantages of their own American "style" and to cease imitating foreign models. As other cultures are "Americanized," the experiments and theories of the American priest will be invaluable to priests in other countries.

The proposals for more basic renovation emerge from the preceding. The progress of theological and philosophical disciplines is in our day so rapid that no one,



no matter how competent, can retain his competence in isolation. Seminary professors in the United States are in the main too isolated—and too busy—to publish, to attend workshops, to rub shoulders day by day with men who have a different point of view. The sheer number of seminaries in the United States, therefore, constitutes a major waste of talent, resources, and possibilities. In one seminary in the East, one talented man is teaching all the philosophy courses; in another in the Midwest, one is teaching college literature, history, and economics.

The great strength of the Holy Cross Fathers is that nearly all their seminaries are affiliated with lay universities or colleges. Even so, it makes little sense that at the Catholic University of America virtually all the religious houses, including the Holy Cross Fathers, maintain independent theological faculties. No wonder few of the professors publish—or even translate the original thought of European theologians. American theology is (save for a very few men) still a generation behind European, though the Council has closed the gap by one generation already. The unwise and illiberal organization of the Catholic University of America deprives American Catholicism of theological leadership.

Thus, from the point of view of a truly profound and stimulating theological education, American seminaries in the near future would do well (as is already occurring in some places) to amalgamate with one another, with nearby Protestant seminaries, and with secular universities. In the Boston area, for example, the Jesuits

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at Weston, St. John's diocesan seminary, Andover-Newton Baptist, the Episcopal Theological School, and Harvard Divinity School all maintain separate faculties. In history courses, in Scripture, and in other areas their courses are interchangeable. It would only be an additional advantage if the dogma courses of each denomination were taught side-by-side; for the misconceptions each group propagates about the other would be much more promptly dissipated than at present.

Secondly, it is not at all clear why seminarians, even religious seminarians, have to live under one roof. For most of their scholastic years, seminarians could just as well be split into cadres of three or four and take apartments for themselves, managing by themselves the responsibilities of daily living. "Community spirit" is, in most religious communities, largely a myth in any case; larger groups in fact break down into smaller psychological circles. The diocese or religious group would not have to assume so large an investment in real estate and administration. The seminarians would live as other men live. Such a way of life would not be injurious either to evangelical values or to the vows. The costs per man of running the present plant could be given out to each as a scholarship and the men could earn the rest of their keep, putting excess earnings into a common fund, for poverty's sake. The women from Grailville live this way.

Seminary Philosophy

Finally, the philosophy which seminarians study should not be Scholastic philosophy. In order even to understand the words employed by Scholastic philosophers, one must be not only a philosopher but also an historian; few seminarians have both talents. Moreover, in order to use Scholastic philosophy intelligently, one has to be cognizant of contemporary philosophy. Three such requirements are two too many. Besides, more of the living principles of Aquinas are available, diffused, in various contemporary currents—pragmatism, existentialism, modern logic, and the analysis of ordinary language—than in old-fashioned Scholastic textbooks, and in many a seminary course.

Such diffusion, moreover, is not fatal. Seminary philosophy is inevitably eclectic, since few of its professors can be expected to be masters of Aquinas; far from standing on his shoulders. the *turba magna* as Rahner calls them would be the first to admit they have a long way to climb. Why, then, cannot the eclecticism be contemporary and living, beginning "from things better known?" If Thomism is kept in the seminaries, someone ought to prepare a twentieth-century textbook without a single direct reference to Aquinas (or perhaps even to Maritain), but accounting for those of his basic insights which are now living elsewhere in contemporary thought.

In short, the priesthood is so central to Christian life that it must be lived as fully and relevantly as possible or the whole Christian people suffers. The old struggle of clericalism and anti-clericalism is past; the new struggle is between those, lay and clerical, who understand *aggiornamento* and those, lay and clerical, who do not understand. It is not a bitter struggle, but it will be a long one. Many people are comfortable in the seminaries as presently constituted, and they will surely create reasons which allow them to remain that way.

On the other hand, few of us nine or ten years ago foresaw that a Council would soon realize many of our dreams; we expected to battle another generation or two before having won so much. Our further dreams are more defined, concrete, and practical now, because their fulfillment is more imminent. Those dreams are for a realistic Church, and the seminaries of the Church are part of that dream. Realism is what we most desire of them, a healthy respect for the world as it is.

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JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN

THE INTERRUPTED

Of the goddess there is only the marble shoulder and
one keen breast, lifted in a shout or love.
The axle is all that remains of the race.

On the smashed frieze, the forelegs, jubilant,
spring from no stallion: spring in the glass case
under the shadow of outside almond bloom.

On a stump, leafless, the slender headless youth
leans on his elbow, tenderly in stone,
to watch something in absence.

Acanthus cannot shake though wind from the sea comes
in; the acanthus is a scrap from a scrap of column.
It is stopped short and waits for us.

The eyes' view, the acanthus moved in wind,
the noble plunge of the stallion, the race, the shout,
achieve themselves in this stone room-

of their company of unbroken peers, the lords.
These escape from the hand's limit to rejoice us
with hope. These are the interrupted.

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An end and a beginning

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN BRITAIN

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

One of Professor Parkinson's most famous Laws is that an institution reaches its fullest development at the moment of its obsolescence. The cut is less unkind than it sounds. Obsolescence may be because an institution is simply redundant, and there is no further use for it. But it may also be because a stage of development has been accomplished and the chrysalis is about to burst into a butterfly; though, till the transformation is complete, it is hard to imagine what sort of butterfly will appear. The case of the Catholic schools in Britain is of the latter kind. The end of the long defensive battle to ensure minimum educational rights to a socially, economically, and (in the opinion of most of the English) theologically disfavored minority of mainly Irish immigrants is in sight. Catholics are emerging as full and equal citizens of Britain. The schools' objectives which suited the defensive phase are on the verge of being won. It seems highly likely that a new pattern of Catholic schools will be needed in future, but what this pattern will be no one can yet tell.

The great change in the last generation is that the atmosphere surrounding Catholic schools has become permissive instead of defensive. The days when Free Church leaders urged their followers to Keep Rome off the Rates, if necessary by refusing to pay this basic local tax, are far in the past. Today Anglican, Free Church, and Catholic representatives may be seen marching together up the steps of the Department of Education and Science to present a common case, and the right of Catholic (or other) parents to schools giving religious teaching acceptable to them is common ground between all British parties.

At the end of the first World War, Catholic schools in Scotland became completely state-supported, or rather the state undertook to provide within its own system schools staffed with Catholic teachers and recruiting Catholic children, as the needs of the Catholic population might require. In England and Wales no settlement was reached at that time. At the end of the Second World War a settlement was made in the expectation that the relative share of the different churches in the school population, and the absolute size of the population, would remain broadly as it was then. As modified by later legislation, this settlement provides that the state shall contribute the whole operating cost of Catholic "aided" schools, in return for bringing them into the general framework of planning and supervision by the state and local education authorities, and shall also contribute 75 per cent of the capital cost of replacing, modernizing, or transferring Catholic schools, or providing additional schools to take students moving on to higher grades from existing lower-grade schools.

But—and this is the point of current argument—the state does *not* contribute towards the capital cost of extending the Catholic school system to provide for an increase in the Catholic population of school age. Unexpectedly, the total population of school age has risen rapidly, and the Catholic share in it, thanks to Irish immigration, has leapt from 10 to 15 per cent.

It has also proved hard to draw the line between the reorganization and transfer of existing schools and extension of the school base. If under slum clearance a large block of Catholic population is moved to a new district, and its old school is closed and a new one opened, that is clearly a transfer. But what if these same Catholics move one by one to a dozen different suburbs, and their children are scattered in small groups through several schools, none of which is in any clear or major sense a successor to the school in the original district? The education authorities for these reasons today recognize that the basis of the 1944 settlement has disappeared, and it seems very likely that 75-per-cent grants will before long become available for all new Catholic schools without reservation.

In fact, the grants may be more than 75 per cent. Like other high schools in Britain, Catholic ones are being switched from a highly selective pattern, with separate schools for the brighter children, to a pattern of common or comprehensive schools. There may also be a reorganization coming in primary education, in particular a change in the ages of transfer between infant, junior, and high schools. On the 1944 principles

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY, *author of* Christian Democracy in Western Europe, *has just returned to the British Isles after an extensive visit to the United States.*

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the cost of reorganization of these kinds should fall on the government. But, as with scattered moves to the suburbs, it is not always easy to say what part of the cost of a new school arises out of reorganization and what would have been needed anyway. The answer may prove to be to raise the overall rate of capital grant to 80 or 85 per cent and hope that the answer will average out fairly between one diocese or order and another.

It is quite possible that if English Catholics asked for the Scottish system they could have it. I am not sure whether they would want it. Under the Scottish system the local education authority owns the school and the Church merely has a right to veto an unsuitable teacher. Under the English system the diocese or the order owns the school, though it is supervised by the local authority. The extra element of control which this implies may or may not be worth paying for; judging from Scottish experience, I doubt it. But the extra interest and sense of responsibility when Catholics have to put their hands at least a little into their own pockets very possibly *is* worth paying for, at least at a modest rate. As the old saying goes, there is nothing like a good debt for pulling a parish together.

But Do We Want Them?

With these changes, the atmosphere surrounding the discussion of church (not only Catholic) schools in Britain is ceasing to be defensive. Gone are those mass meetings of Catholic parents which I used to address twenty years ago, charged with the emotion of "Faith of our Fathers" and closing their ranks as one man for the right to Catholic schools. That right has been won. The state will soon be offering Catholic schooling on near enough the same terms as schooling of any other kind. The ranks no longer need to close, defensiveness is fading, and a permissive spirit is replacing it.

At the same time Catholics are reaching the end of their upward movement in the British social hierarchy. A generation ago many of them still lived concentrated in the original ghettos of Irish immigration. Today they have spread everywhere. As late as 1950 a Catholic boy or girl, because of Catholics' depressed and restricted social background, had only about two-thirds the chance of an average British boy or girl for a college education. Now this proportion is approaching unity. Catholics in Britain, except the most recent Irish immigrants, have come to be, not a race apart, but ordinary British citizens, with—coming back to the schools—an accepted right in school matters to do things their own way.

The paradox is that precisely at the moment when this new equal and permissive atmosphere is spreading through the land, the question begins timidly but seriously to be asked: do we really want Catholic schools after all, and, if so, for what? Actually, of course, this only seems to be a paradox, for is not the reason why teachers and mental health workers try to create a permissive atmosphere precisely that, when defensiveness is relaxed, forbidden issues can at least be rationally discussed? I do not say that this question is being very widely or insistently asked, least of all that it is being asked officially; you will certainly not hear it in the offices of the Catholic Education Council. But it begins now to put its head above ground, and can at least be asked without drawing the charge of treason to the cause. It comes in three forms.

First and most obviously: is not a separate system of schools something which needs special justification? In some areas at least (chiefly in certain of the, bluntly, more backward districts of the North) the line which it draws through the school population reflects and encourages a regrettable cleavage in the population as a whole. Even a mild division needs justification at a time when segregation by class, ability, and community background is being vigorously attacked in the school system as a whole.

Secondly: can this separation be justified on general educational grounds? Apart from their religious effects, do Catholic schools show a different or wider range of educational experiment than schools of any other kind? The answer may well be "no." It has been a fixed principle of the English bishops that in all except religious matters the Catholic schools shall follow the pattern set by the state. There has been no question of challenging the state's pattern, even when on educational grounds there was a good case for doing so. I have heard much the same said by Anglicans of their church schools. The pattern, for instance, of rigid selection for higher-grade schools, from which the country is now in the process of turning away, was challenged in its heyday by many others, but not by the authorities in charge of the church schools.

Thirdly, how do the religious effects of Catholic schooling compare with those of religious education for Catholic children in non-Catholic schools, which over a third of English Catholic pupils still attend; or rather with the results which might have been attained among Catholic children in non-Catholic schools if so much Catholic effort had not been locked up in keeping the Catholic schools going?

We do not know; we have even less in the way of hard data on this problem than is available in the

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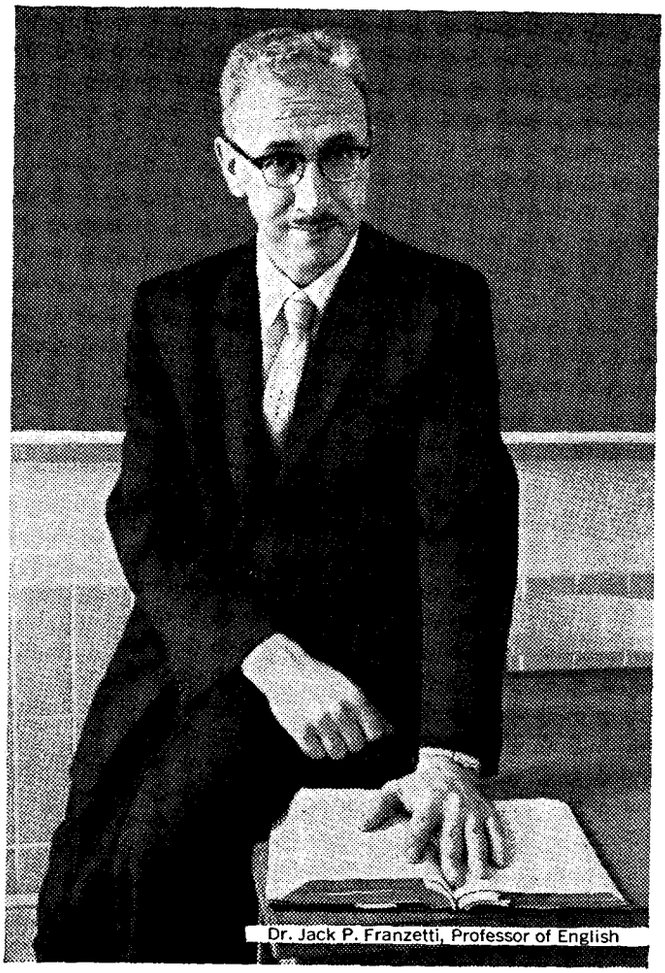
Anthony John Pepe, class of '66

Tony Pepe has a faculty for achievement



Dr. Jack P. Franzetti, Professor of English

...so has St. John's

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These words, coming from St. John's senior Anthony John Pepe, would seem to understate the case, if one were to examine the exceptional scholastic record he has achieved since entering as a freshman in 1962. Tony is currently President of the Roger Bacon Scientific Honor Society, Treasurer of the Biology Society, Science Editor of the *Newsletter*, member of the Honors Program, the Orientation Committee, Sigma Tau Alpha Literary Fraternity and the Skull and Circle Honor Society.

What is Tony's goal in life? As a pre-medical student, he plans to become a surgeon someday, fulfilling the dream he has had since early childhood. St. John's can point with pride to young men like Tony Pepe who strive to develop their capabilities to the fullest.

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United States. But I would guess that one could apply in a rough and ready way some of the findings which have emerged there. The Catholic schools have done, in a solid, competent way, the job of producing Catholics of a traditional type: well drilled in the basics of the Faith, regular Mass attenders, unlikely to be married outside the Church. They have not been outstandingly successful in producing leaders even of the class to which the majority of Catholics have belonged; Catholics have been under-represented at the top even of the labor movement. And the results they have achieved were gained in the past with the help of social conditions which are now passing away: close-knit, stable, inturned, working or lower middle class parishes, where custom and practice could be relied on to reinforce the teaching of the parish school.

Today Catholics live in a more open environment where custom and practice no longer support them, and they need not simply a traditional drill but a type of teaching which makes them sensitive to current developments in and out of the Church and equips them to judge and act on these developments for themselves. The religious practice of English Catholics, now among the lowest in Europe begins to indicate that when it comes to training Catholics for this new world both the Catholic schools and the Catholic community are falling short.

I do not see much sign, except on the lunatic fringe, that this will lead to the rejection of Catholic schools. We need Catholic schools in any case as pioneers in general education (if only they would do more of it); as models for Catholic religious education; and as a safeguard; a fallback resource capable at need of being expanded, in case of a future swing in the wrong direction in the state's policy for religious teaching.

Most of us, by instinct, since the hard data for decision are lacking, would, I think, go further. There will always be a plain, basic job of passing on the tradition of the faith. The Church is not only for an elite. It includes all of us, from good homes or bad, with high ability and religious motivation or with low. Most British Catholic parents know themselves well enough to have no illusions about their own ability to compensate for any defects in religious teaching in the schools. They will need strong evidence to be convinced that the basic, stolid (if you like) job of sheepdog to a flock of as mixed and sometimes limited quality as this can be done better outside the Catholic school than in it.

But in what Catholic school? That's one question which I think will be pressed much harder in the next few years, not least by Catholic teachers. What ought the Catholic school to be, and is this in fact what it is? The other coming question is: even if we prefer the Catholic school, need our preference for it be quite so rigid? Need we press for a Catholic school for every Catholic child, and should we not rather use resources to fill the glaring gaps in provision for Catholic students in areas where no formally Catholic schooling exists, including not only the schools in some parts of the country but also, everywhere, the technical colleges, plus better coverage (since they are partly covered already) for the universities?

It will be interesting to see how far British school administrators in general, in the Department of Education and Science and the local authorities, grasp the lesson of all this. In Aesop's fable the wind and the sun challenged each other to get the traveller to take off his cloak. The wind howled down in a blast, and the traveller gripped his cloak closer round him. The sun came out, and in a minute the cloak was off. If they are wise (and in general they are), British educational leaders will recognize that the first condition for a fruitful dialogue over the church schools is to recognize the right of Catholics and others to have these schools if they choose. It is when permissiveness comes in that teeth are unclenched and defenses go down. But, granted permissiveness, the education authorities can play a most fruitful role simply by enquiring patiently—by insisting as a condition not of aid but of intellectual self-respect—that Catholics shall explain the contribution which Catholic schools are making to the national educational system.

You Catholics, they might say, are entitled to your own schools if you choose to have them. But would you as a matter of friendly interest (we non-Catholics, after all, might have much to learn from you) mind telling us why you choose to have them? Could you give us your hard data, from properly designed studies, to show why Catholic schools generally and yours in particular are better for general or religious education than arrangements for Catholic children along other lines? (We could not supply these data: we do not have them.)

We, they might say, have a democratically controlled school system, in which parents have their say as citizens and through parent-teacher associations and the like. Teachers, through their representative organizations, also have a very effective say right up to national policy-making level. How do these things stand on the Catholic side? (Not, I regret to say, very well.) Threats, in short, no: but the art of asking awkward questions (*the* gift of a good corporation director, as the textbooks remind us), very much yes. There is a lesson here for authorities in other countries besides Britain.

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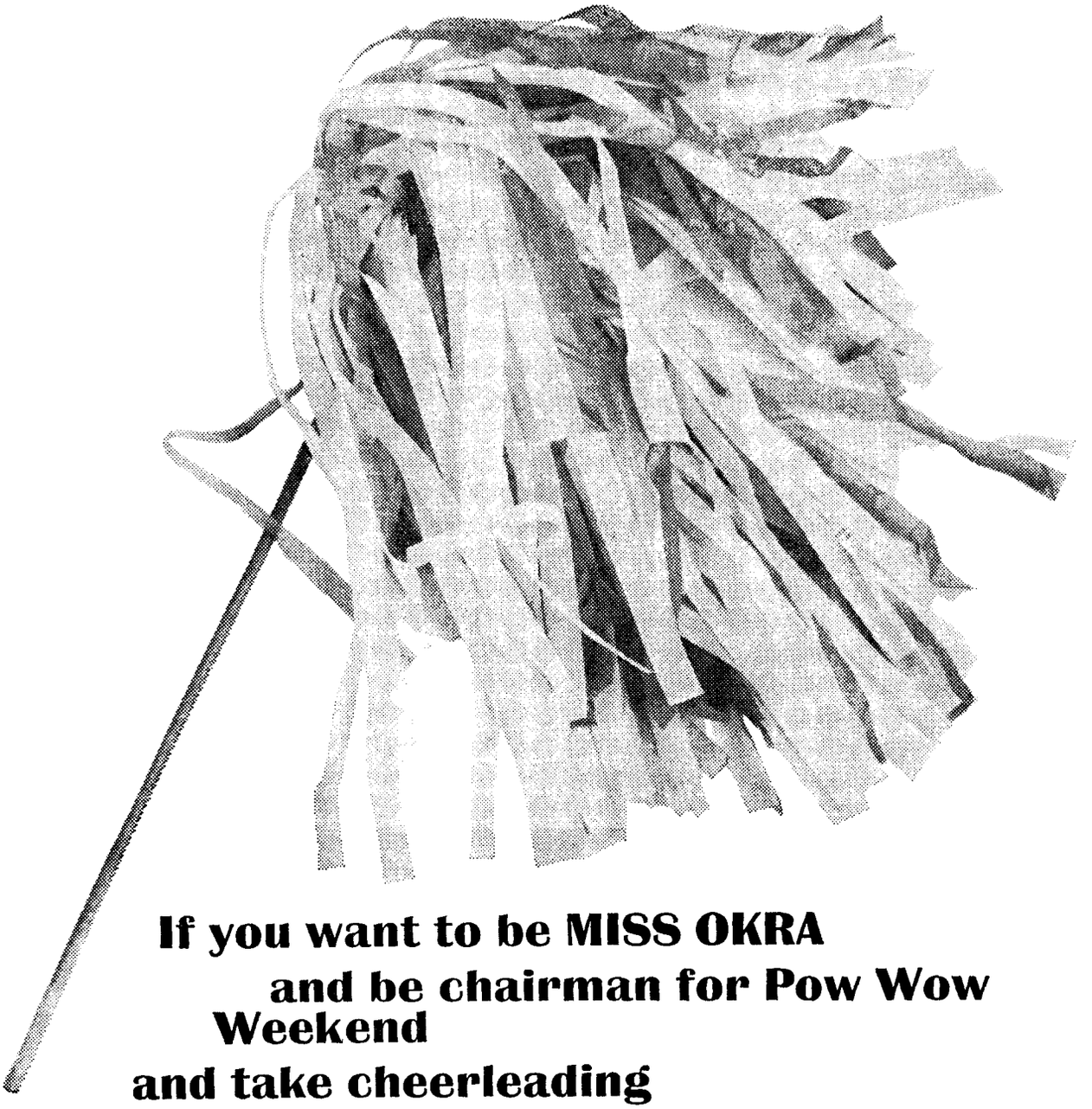

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Poetry at the gate

THE CITADEL OF PROSE

JOHN P. SISK

Most of the trials of the English teacher can be traced to the fact that his subject is in the common domain. It is not simply that the English teacher suspects that his brother professors in other departments secretly believe themselves to be quite adequate judges of literature and are therefore convinced that the teaching of it is at best a pseudo-professional activity. One can learn to live with this suspicion: in fact, one does. Harder to endure are those complaints—often expressed as guileless observations—that the English department is failing to accomplish the only one of its objectives that the rest of the academy takes seriously: the development in the student of the skills of expository prose.

It is apparently impossible for most non-English teachers to understand how a student who got a "B" in freshman composition is later unable to write at a "B" level in history, political science or psychology courses. Yet to a large degree, a student's capacity to express himself effectively depends on his confidence in his ability to maintain control in the particular context in which he happens to find himself. A student able to write satisfactory themes in the hothouse environment of a freshman writing course may a year later fail miserably in a political science course, in which he must break into strange country pretty much by himself and come back with a report of his adventure.

The English teacher at least should know better. The subject he works with, imaginative literature, gives him countless examples of the relation between coherence of reaction and confidence in one's ability to maintain control in a given situation. *Hamlet* is a record of such a relationship: one might speak of it analogously as the protagonist's agonizing struggle to reduce a jumble of facts and conflicting information to a clear statement. The Hamlet who at Wittenberg might have written "A" papers on degree or mutability operates on a "C" level throughout most of his sojourn at Elsinore.

Othello, a tragedy in which the central concern is with control, describes even better such a declension from mastery to incoherence. Othello in Act I, coming upon the group led by the aroused Brabantio, is superbly confident of his ability to keep a potentially explosive situation in hand: "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them." His style is an implicit promise to the audience that he will remain in control in whatever context he happens to find himself. But thrown into a strange context in which unsuspected forces in his personality are released, his wonderful style breaks down, and he ends in a shambles.

The fear of a declension into incoherence, of a failure of the controlling functions of style, is understandably the endemic fear in the academy—as it is indeed the endemic fear in civilization itself, ever haunted by the narrow margin that separates it from confusion and disorder. This fear is a prime factor in the academy's perennial concern with the failure of the English department as a custodian of student prose. For the academy is a citadel of prose. It depends on prose to communicate its image of itself to faculty, students and the community at large. To itself and to the world outside, the academy means the control of time and information. It organizes and conserves the past as a protective bastion against the pressure of the present and the threat of the future. In the academy wise men go about their tasks with deliberate leisure, unperturbed by passing fads and fancies, confident that tomorrow will present no problems that will not yield to the accumulated wisdom of the past.

The Threat Within

Unfortunately, much of the information that the academy organizes and conserves exists in forms that threaten the peace and order that traditionally characterize its hallowed groves. All research is a threat: the more information accumulates, the greater the possibility that old formulations, on which the order of the academy is founded, will be questioned or found inadequate. The academy, especially in the electronic age, might be said to live in dread of the consequences of its own commitment to honest and painstaking study. One of these consequences is the immense amount of research, mainly in the sciences and social sciences, financed by and conducted largely in the interest of government

JOHN P. SISK, *chairman of the English Department at Gonzaga University, Washington, has contributed to* America, Thought *and the* New York Times Book Review.

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and industry, both of which came in time to see the great practical advantage of an institution committed to an orderly pursuit of the truth.

Thus was established an important form of subsidization by agencies traditionally considered alien to the academy. At first, the academy felt strong enough to assimilate them without doing harm to its own values. But such research grants could not be separated from the contexts in which they originated; thus technology and its involvement with time and process violated the settled calm of the citadel of prose. This was not all to the bad, for the academy was too inclined to isolate itself from the time rate and processes of the outside world. Nevertheless, the academy had compromised itself with political and industrial centers of power and anxiety about control resulted.

But long before that there had been anxiety about control from another source within the academy. Insofar as the academy is an institution concerned with the control of its various elements in the interest of efficient and frictionless operation, poetry has always been a threat to it. Wherever there is poetry there is poetic license, which is not merely a permissiveness with respect to minor proprieties of grammar and syntax but a kind of linguistic Machiavellianism that is an expression of a radical independence. By its nature poetry presses to the verge of incoherence, and will risk going beyond when menaced by the cliché. Its tendency, especially since the romantics, is to be passionately private; it is both by implicit assumption and explicit statement highly critical of the traditional certainties upon which the prose world of the academy is established.

By the standards of that world, poetry—the arch enemy of the cliché and the IBM card—points to the subversive and anarchic. It excites the young to rebellion against the prose establishment.

Over the years, the academy subjected poetry to various controls. At first only Latin and Greek poetry were studied, then vernacular poetry, though still poetry of the past, about whose meaning and value there was a comfortable scholarly consensus. Ultimately, of course, contemporary poetry, and even some of the people who wrote it, came into the academy, but even in this exigency that powerful control, the language of scholarship, continues to operate. It is reinforced by the writing of academic poetry, a device resorted to by the scholar in an effort to prove to himself and his confreres that there is really nothing to be afraid of.

Literary scholarship has a dual function within the

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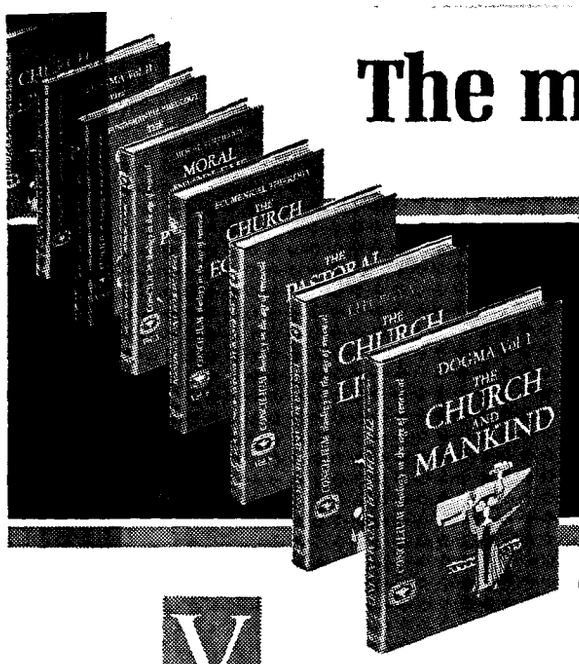

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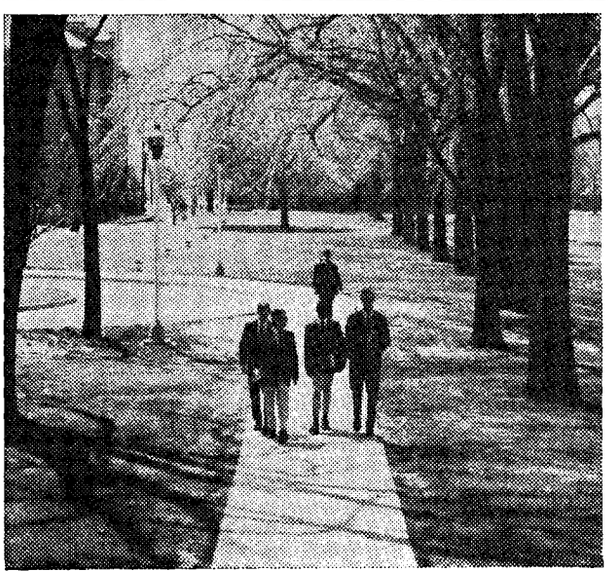

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academy. On the one hand it makes poetry more available and meaningful to readers; on the other it employs the artifices of academic expository prose to counter or neutralize the dangers of poetry. The scholar meticulously and soberly at work on *Prometheus Unbound* puts that subversive poem in a buffering prose context no matter how sympathetic he may be to Shelley's vision. Implied in making the poem lie quietly, as if anesthetized, while it is explicated, analyzed or evaluated, is an assertion that in certain important respects the poet is subordinate to and properly controlled by the scholar, and that as an instrument of knowledge the symbolic imagination is inferior to the discursive reason.

This is not necessarily to say hard things about the scholar, who is, among other things, the agent of a cybernetic function, of that dialectic interchange between private impulse and public need without which society could not exist. The same thing is true of the academy as prose conservator in conflict with all impulses to ignore the relevance of the past. It is unthinkable that the Shelleys should be absolved of all accountability to the demands of the prose world; indeed, those demands are part of the context in which the Shelleys exist and make sense. We cannot imagine poetry without a prose against which it not only defines itself but upon which it ultimately depends for a launching pad.

But this is to look at the conflict between prose and poetry only in the larger view. Meanwhile, there is the academy's uneasiness about poetry—to say nothing of its uneasiness about those mavericks, the poets-in-residence, and those professors who insist on writing poetry rather than scholarly articles about it. Poetry is too personal, too eccentric, too disdainful of the conventional rational view, too irresponsible, too cavalier about administrative exigency. Poetry is the individual demanding attention, asserting his own lyric needs against the controlling prose clichés of the academy and the world. Poetry means that prose is not enough, just as pure research in science means that applied science is not enough. When students, then, cannot master expository prose—or worse still, refuse to take it seriously—they not only arouse concern about the educative process but they arouse deeper anxieties about the control of a basically precarious operation.

In the breakdown of prose the academy experiences analogously that trepidation that makes *Othello* such a powerful symbolic action for a nuclear society: the trepidation that comes with the realization that one is on the verge of being confronted with information that will force a radical change in one's world picture. This

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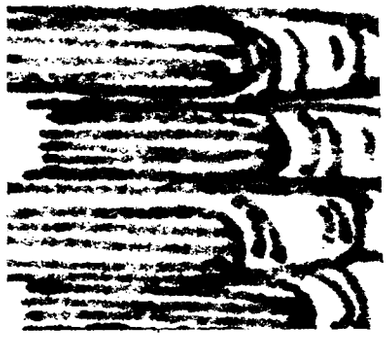
is why there is so ordinarily an element of over-reaction when it appears that there is a deterioration in the prose-training program. The very center of things is threatening to give way. Implicitly the English faculty stands accused of failing to exercise sufficient control over one of the most disruptive of all forces in the academy—imaginative literature.

All of which is to say it is oversimplified to think the academy is unqualifiedly devoted to the pursuit of the truth. The academy's urge to push to the limits of knowledge, even to dangle precariously over the void, is always countered by the fear that a new flow of information will reveal that its capacity for organization and interpretation is inadequate or irrelevant. This is the academy functioning as prudent conservator, protecting itself against its own potentiality for dangerous excess. Otherwise, education would be indiscriminately adventuresome. It would, as a matter of fact, be quite impossible.

As a result, its style becomes prosy and cliché-ridden and it is inclined to express its apprehensions symptomatically in an excessive—and at times obsessive—concern with grammar, spelling and punctuation. English teachers know that the easiest way to exercise some kind of control over student writing is to be content to hold it strictly to account for fundamentals. They also know how deceptive this control can be, for it simply establishes a limited well-fenced area outside of which students can roam wildly. Likewise, when the administration becomes control-conscious, it simply results in leaving the students naked to experience. One



might say of them then that in a world charged with metaphysical poetry they are asked to react only with the habits of low-pressure expository prose.

The irrelevance of so much of the educative process to the pressures of the metaphysically charged world is a major factor in the student discontent at Berkeley and wherever else the citadel of prose is being shaken. Students are experiencing the modern simultaneity of

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contending points of view, of past and present, of far and near, that threatens to make obsolete those traditional ways of organizing and evaluating information to which, as students see it, the academy is overly committed. Too often in crisis situations the academy gives students the impression that it is organized to resist information and play down values that seem to them quite crucial. Too often, apparently, it looms before them as a giant person-annihilating cliché-factory bent on disposing of them efficiently in terms of irrelevant abstractions.

Administrative incoherence as it attempts to deal with this discontent is itself an indication of the limits of those prose formulations upon which the academy's confidence in itself is based. The incoherence has real fear behind it. One imagines the refractory student as he makes his hyperbolic appearance in the mind of the harassed administrator: unpressed, skintight jeans; open and probably dirty collar; unkempt hair; fanatic gleam in his eye; in his pocket a ticket to Selma and a beatnik-type poem that announces—not too intelligibly and certainly not in any identifiable metric or stanzaic pattern—his commitment to some radical cause; in short, all the classic signs of the student who just barely passed his freshman writing course. Add to this picture hard evidence that the boy writes faulty prose, as in his headlong enthusiasm he may, and the syndrome of subversion is complete. Chaos is come again.

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ANNETTE BASALYGA

SAINT KEVIN AND THE BLACKBIRD

Knowing his patience and his eccentricity
Of praying with one arm uplifted,
Stretched outside his window,
The nesting bird and the rest
Of the story is utterly predictable.
The imagination dwells then,
Not on the span of time
(One whole Lenten season)
Nor on the cupped hand's discipline,
But on the prayer itself,
Whether it was much disturbed,
Whether the saint thought of the bird at all.
One way he'd be a patron of those
Who find themselves put upon in small ways,
The other, an unwitting pragmatist,
Held in the loose fist of his ecstasy
And brooding such fledgings
Which are beside the point of myth.

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FACES OF WAR

THE SCREEN

It seems incredible to me that so many war films are made—and even more incredible that they still manage to fill the theaters. Yet they do, and three recent arrivals, emphasizing war-time horrors, are bound to win attention. The most amazing thing about Nicole Stephane's "To Die in Madrid," a French documentary about the Spanish Civil War, is its lyrical quality. Producer Frederic Rossif is not glorifying war, but after collecting newsreel clips and photographs and other coverage of the Spanish holocaust from European and American archives, he carefully edited and pieced together what he describes as "a film of remembrance." And the result is a cinematic epic poem that includes death and destruction and heroism and folly, all seen, in spite of photography's realism, as through a haze of time.

Most viewers will approach "To Die in Madrid" with their own ideas about the rightness and wrongness of each side in the 1936-1939 civil war, one of the most death-dealing wars in history. It is not Rossif's purpose to change their minds. Although his leanings toward the Loyalist cause are evident, he does display the brave fighting on both sides, and the atrocities committed by both. And the excellent script, written by Madeleine Chapsal, also tries to preserve an unbiased tone while recounting the events in Spain through those dreadful years. Helen Scott's careful, rhythmic translation of the Chapsal script is beautifully read by John Gielgud, Irene Worth, William Hutt, and George Gonneau; and, accompanied by the good sound track with a musical score by Maurice Jarre, the visuals become even more moving. To many, the place names and the names of the authors quoted (Bernanos, Unamuno, and others) will be familiar—as will the stunning views of Spain in war and peace. But to all viewers, young and old, "To Die in Madrid" stands as an awe-inspiring commentary on life and death and the passing of an age.

Also made in Spain, although set in a military stockade in North Africa, is Kenneth Hyman's production of "The Hill." While set in World War II, "The Hill" is not actually a war film, but a portrait of wartime

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brutality and the army's disregard for the dignity of man. The weak commander of the prison is interested only in himself. His regimental sergeant is a stiff-necked bully with a one-track mind who insists his job is to remake the British soldier-prisoners sent to him and to get them back to active duty. His main instrument for punishment is the hill, a pile of sand up and down which the sergeant sends his erring men, fully packed, in the boiling sun. His mental cruelties are almost as severe; and the plot in the screenplay by Ray Rigby, centers on five men who are given the works by the tough sergeant.

Director Sidney Lumet has portrayed all this with a forceful realism that will make most viewers cringe during most of the picture's two-hour running time. His cast is first-rate and are as rough-and-ready as the bleak, sunny, sandy stockade where practically all the action takes place. Among the sergeants running this hell-hole are Harry Andrews as the main, implacable brute, Ian Hendry as his sadistic second, and Ian Bannen as a man of some decency who wants to be practical and still give a prisoner a chance. Outstanding among the prisoners are Sean Connery who refuses to kowtow, Ossie Davis as a West Indian who takes a dim view of the white man's rules, Jack Watson as a tough who fights with superiors and men. If you can stick it out through all its beatings and indignities, you'll find the finale worth waiting for, although it proves as heart-breaking as some of the events that precede it. I'm not sure what "The Hill" is trying to prove—that war is hell? that man is inhuman to his fellows? that weak "superiors" like the commandant and the prison's medical officer (Michael Redgrave) are mainly at fault? that meaningless severity causes the breakdown of the system? or that what the audience needs is catharsis?

Attempting to show that war debases and brutalizes men, "King and Country" tells a World War I story of a private who is arrested for desertion, court martialed, and sentenced to death. What makes this tale particularly interesting is that the private is a dopey sort of guy who, exhausted after three years in the trenches, didn't really mean to desert: he just left and walked away toward home. The role is expertly played by Tom Courtenay as a simpleton. Contrasted with him is Dirk Bogarde as the hard, somewhat-sophisticated captain detailed to defend the young man who puts his complete trust in the bright superior officer. What happens is shocking.

But director Joseph Losey means for his picture to be shocking. He stresses the mud and grime and inhuman behavior in the trenches while the pathetically naïve lad is being railroaded to death. Unfortunately the symbols, the contrasts, and the unpleasant theme itself become so arty as the film advances that one begins to disbelieve the whole thing. "King and Country" is a tract that means well but loses all its force in the contrived telling. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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BOOKS

Some lessons of World War II

Hostile Allies: FDR and De Gaulle

MILTON VIORST

Macmillan, $6.95

The Murder of Admiral Darlan

PETER TOMPKINS

Simon and Schuster, $5.95

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

World War II is now a generation past, part of that indeterminate world where historical memory and present politics mingle in indistinction. Reminiscence and the present in combination make for drama, and Viorst and Tompkins are writers skilled at the weaving of a tale. Perhaps, in fact, they are a bit too skillful. Viorst's admiration for de Gaulle leads him to assert that the French failure to halt German expansion between 1933 and 1939 was due to the lack of a "mobile striking force," which almost certainly was not the case. Tompkins's concern to trace the threads of an Ian Fleming-like conspiracy of French and German cartelists to preserve their position after the war, though it makes good reading, depends on a combination of paranoid suspicion of his villains and credulity toward certain critical "delayed" reports, "recollected" statements and "temporarily withheld" confessions.

Yet one can learn even from suspect history. The common theme of both books is the wartime relations of France and the United States, in which both are partisans of General de Gaulle and sharply critical of American policy. The advocacy remains salient, the criticisms trenchant, even though the events they describe now are buried in the past, for it is a past not so far removed as to lack lessons for the present.

One of the *dramatis personae* still plays a major international role. Charles de Gaulle has never been easy for Americans to appreciate, and his conflict with Roosevelt was, as Viorst suggests, partly no more than a reflection of differences in "national culture." A statesman may shape himself for the role of leadership, but the form of the shape is determined by the people he would lead: fundamentally, the statesman is a man of *a* state. Roosevelt learned the school of American politics: humility, friendliness, *bonhomie* (his idea of putting de Gaulle at ease consisted of calling him "Charles"); de Gaulle shaped himself for a more than ordinary destiny, and assumed that the statesman must be friendless and alone. No American politician could write of the "vague quality of melancholy which lodges in whatever is majestic," and least of all Roosevelt with his ebullient sense of humor.

American politics, in short, does not allow its statesmen much in the way of pretension. Unfortunately, that means that the popular and incautious historian may find the American statesman bereft of grandeur or the image of "greatness." In part, that accounts for the pro-de Gaulle sentiments of Viorst and Tompkins. World War II only exaggerated the effect. Roosevelt was the leader of a great power whose decisions shaped the world of politics, and was forced to wade in the choked and somewhat fetid waters of political compromise and complexity. De Gaulle's only "responsibility" lay to his vision of France's future; he did not need to make the great decisions—indeed, he could not make them, a fact which rankled more than a little. Yet, supreme tactician that he is, de Gaulle grasped the fact that the weak may compensate for their lack of resources by arrogance of tone and intransigence of manner. The responsibility of the strong may compel them to yield; the irresponsibility of the weak allows the luxury of moral tone and uncompromising fervor. That too may win the devotion

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of the historian who enjoys the dramatic utterance or the heroic stance more than the prosaic but agonizing dilemmas of political choice and compromise.

Roosevelt was a far greater statesman than the two stories imply. Viorst at least realizes the necessity of the policy of American recognition of Vichy. Britain, hard-pressed enough, relied on the United States to keep Vichy from open hostility to the allied cause. Roosevelt harbored few delusions about the leaders of Vichy: he refused to ratify the deal which local American officials had made with Admiral Darlan, and he quickly saw through the facade of the ex-Vichyite Giraud. If he refused to recognize de Gaulle's sovereignty, it was because he considered himself a trustee for the "French people" and could not bring himself to believe in de Gaulle's popularity.

That was an error in judgment, if an understandable one (who would have voted for de Gaulle in the United States?). Yet Roosevelt was as clear-sighted about French politics as de Gaulle: his prediction that France would have a revolution which would reform the system on more American lines was, if delayed, verified after 1958 by de Gaulle himself. In international politics, Roosevelt saw clearer and better than the General. Realizing that the age of empire was dead, he proposed an international trusteeship for Indo-China—a solution, one suspects, de Gaulle regrets not having adopted, and which he (and the United States) would welcome today.

A statesman, however, is no better than his advisors and the administrative system that carries his policies into practice. Here, in fact, was the source of de Gaulle's greatest asset in the making of history. The small size of Free France made it less necessary for him to delegate authority; the revolutionary character of the movement enabled him to select his advisors from the fervently loyal who shared his objectives and aims.

However, Roosevelt, more compelled to rely on advisors and administrators, was not so well served. In part, the responsibility was his: the selection of a somewhat muddle-headed Secretary of State like Cordell Hull for what were clearly domestic political reasons can only partly be excused. Yet the professional Department of State seems to have been gravely deficient. Roosevelt knew Hull's faults, and instructed Robert Murphy in North Africa to "report direct" on matters of interest. Yet Murphy, subsequently our "ace trouble-shooter," was incredibly incompetent, full of an ignorant and sunny confidence that our underground collaborators could be deluded as to the date of the invasion almost until its eve without impairing the efficacy of their plans.

Murphy, moreover, illustrated an even graver fault of the Department: its tendency to rely on, and to prefer dealings with, members of social, economic and political "elites." In part, this is a cost of an over-expert diplomacy which finds dealings with other "experts" more pleasant than relations with "demagogues"; in part, it reflects the tendency of all bureaucracies to transform methods and policies into goals. That alone might account for the fact that the Department transformed *recognition* of Vichy on grounds of political necessity into *support* for Vichy on grounds of political preference. To some degree, the Department may have acted from simple elitist bias: officials referred to the "best elements in

Elmer O'Brien, SJ, Editor

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This is the first of a series of comprehensive critical surveys of contemporary trends in theology and its related disciplines: Old and New Testament, patristics, and liturgical studies. The book spans the decisive decade, 1954-1964, and constitutes a major attempt on the part of the English-language theologians to assess the merits of the scholarly output of that period. Contributors include Walter J. Burghardt, SJ, Roland E. Murphy, O Carm, Joseph H. Crehan, SJ, John J. Collins, SJ, and John Miller, CSC. $5.95

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THE CHURCH AS MISSION

Preface by Richard Cardinal Cushing. Foreword by Karl Rahner, SJ. The author of this book is an American missionary and theologian presently stationed among the Masai tribe of East Africa. Highly critical of recent theories of missiology which identify missionary work with "convert making," Father Hillman probes the sacramental and eschatological significance of the Church's mission to preach the gospel to all nations. He arrives at a dynamic and challenging notion of the ecclesial vocation by reconciling the biblical idea of mission with the Church's growing understanding of the notion of salvation history. $3.75

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France" with a meaning only lamentably clear.

Whatever the reasons, the effects are with us yet: Murphy's extolling of Weygand finds its parallel in more than one diplomat today in Latin America and Asia. Nor is the Department yet free from the tendency to believe that the "highest and lowest" support some political leader—as it did of Pétain—on the basis of the opinion of the "highest" alone (it came as a shock that, while half the officers of liberated Madagascar wished to serve in the "official" French forces, *all* the enlisted personnel preferred the Free French).

Nor did the American army show to much advantage in the web of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy of French political factions, in their army and out. The story, which Tompkins relates so admirably, of a potpourri of overlapping cabals of Fascists, Royalists, Communists, Vichyites and Gaullists creates an irresistible memory of *Penguin Island*. Eisenhower's invocation of his "team concept," that the French should "work out together" the problem of unified command was inappropriate enough. Unfortunately, his selection of Mark Clark as his intermediary was worse: Clark was the perfect counterpart in pettiness of the French officers with whom he was sent to deal (it appears that he decided to support Darlan on the basis of a *point d'honneur*—General Giraud insisted on Clark, as the junior officer, visiting him rather than the reverse), but by far their inferior in guile. Clark's role in North Africa might have forecast the disasters of his command in Italy; Eisenhower, alas, was hardly the man to see as much.

There is a charm to the political naivete of the American generals: in a functioning political system, generals need only obey and need not search their political consciences. What de Gaulle realized, as the French generals with their cult of obedience to "lawful authority" did not, was that France was in political decay, when even generals must have the courage to disobey. It is fortunate when tha sort of crisis can be avoided, as gen erals are only too likely to choos wrongly; but crisis, when it arises, ha a logic of its own.

The recognition of French crisis wa what united both Roosevelt and de Gaulle, if they differed on who was best equipped to solve it, and what distinguished them as statesmen from the political cretins on both sides who imagined that the old order and the "best elements" could be restored, and from the generals who believed that one need only obey and fight to do one's duty. Yet the statesman must always depend on others than himself, perhaps more so today, in a world increasingly complex and perilous, than in the time of World War II—a time which has, to the contemporary reader, a certain perverse calm and charm. It is high time that America realized that the skills of the greatest statesmen are wasted if their policies are shaped on advice from, and carried out by, generals to whom policy is the footballer's code and a Department of State dangerously prone to equate the "best elements" with the highest social circles of professional diplomacy.

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The Bride and the Bachelors

CALVIN TOMKINS

Viking, $6.50

JOHN GERASSI

The true purpose of art is not to interpret life, not even to express it—but to possess it. So, at least, says Calvin Tomkins, a *New Yorker* staff writer who has taken four of the profiles he wrote for the magazine and put them together in this light, lively book. Each of his four artist-subjects—Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, Jean Tinguely, and Robert Rauschenberg—are characterized, in the short introduction, as suitors ("the bachelors") striving to possess life ("the bride"), and it is intimated that they succeed more than most artists because their art, like life itself, is based on chance, indeterminism, silence, accident, illu-

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sion and contradiction.

These are the variants, we are told, that affected the lives of our four characters themselves, and one follows their trajectories, inevitably fascinating and flamboyant, unpredictable and unrestrained, with as much ease as if they had been invented for our enjoyment. We are, in fact, seduced by their adventures and their daring.

How marvelously exciting to find an artist like Duchamp with the wit and bravura to hang ordinary manufactured objects (such as toilet bowls), sign them, and then sell them at exorbitant prices as "readymade" Duchamp creations! How exotically quaint to encounter a composer like Cage tossing three coins six times in order to plot a diagram from which notes and pitch are mathematically determined and then produce the resulting composition in a concert hall! How delightfully amusing to see a sculptor like Tinguely labor over wires, acids, motors, fans, baby carriages and addressograph machines to concoct a mammoth contraption called "Homage to New York," which destroys itself in front of a chic collection of art patrons right in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art! And how voguishly shocking to come across a painter like Rauschenberg who uses a quilt as a canvas, adds a pillow and a few dabs of paint, calls the outcome "Bed," and tries to exhibit it at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy!

Quaint and amusing yes, but what does it prove? In Duchamp's last, unfinished work, "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even" (which is painted on glass and from whose title the title of this book is derived), the bachelors—abstract strips unrecognizably symbolizing phallic strength—are stuck in one pane, while the bride—three square-like voids encased in a fish-like blob—is in another. The two never meet: artists can't possess life.

Then what makes these four so exceptional? They try harder to live more, says the author. "The courtship is what matters." Or, as Cage puts it, "the highest purpose is to have no purpose at all. This puts one in accord

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with nature in her manner of operation." In other words, art is the act of creation—not the created object. Rauschenberg meant the same thing when he once told me: "Art has neither past nor future, neither history nor theory."

Tomkins carefully avoids making an aesthetic theory out of this anti-theoretical jargon, but he agilely guides the reader along until the conclusion is locked onto his head: art is not self-expression, not interpretation; it is simply a manifestation. Of what? Time and space, says Duchamp. Chance or "purposeless play," posits Cage. Movement, that is, freedom, declaims Tinguely. Material, interjects Rauschenberg. Are these not interpretations? Self-expressions? "I don't think of myself as making art," says Rauschenberg. "I do what I do because I want to, because painting is the best way I've found to get along with myself."

And there is the clue. Perhaps an artist must never think that he is producing "art." Perhaps he must deny the past and the future, and must live, as the existentialists insist, the full intensity of the moment. But whatever art is, it is never stripped bare of its artists. It is always an interpretation, even if only of the artist himself at the moment of creation. If the work of Duchamp, Cage, Tinguely and Rauschenberg has any appeal (and it certainly does), it is precisely because that work is self-expressive, precisely because it defines the world (even if only fleetingly and in terms of chaos). As long as an artist works to "get along with himself," he creates in order to live—and nothing could be more personal than that. By 1984, art may not sell as well as machine-made decorations, but the artist will always be around spouting his absolutes.

Tomkins has written a delightful quadruple-biography. But he has proven the contrary to his thesis. An artist does not seek to generate the new for its own sake, as Duchamp claims. Instead, he strives to express the new for *his* sake. Thus, it is not true that Duchamp stopped painting in 1923 because he got "bored." He simply had nothing *to say*. He got boring.

A Lermontov Reader

GUY DANIELS

Macmillan, $7.50

ARCADI NEBOLSINE

Yevtushenko remembers a decisive moment of his poetic career when "Lermontov leaped from the pages of anthologies, his horse in a lather." This experience may have now become possible for American readers thanks to the spirited anthology of Guy Daniels, a collection that rightly omits the well-known *Hero of Our Time* but includes interesting pieces both important and occasionally downright bad—in all a fair summary of this great and unequal poet who is as overrated in Russia as he is neglected everywhere else.

Lermontov (1814-1841) is perhaps the second most quoted poet in Russian literature, but not many Russians would be familiar with some of Mr. Daniel's inclusions—the novel *Princess Ligovskaya*, the play *The Strange One* or the

"What astounds . . . and alarms, is the apparent purpose of their system."

—Chicago *Tribune* review of

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comic verses of *The Tambov Treasurer's Wife*. But they would be struck by the freshness and controversy of his approach. In a challenging introduction Mr. Daniels says Lermontov is the "Great Rebel of Russian literature . . . the only one who never gave in" and in a "blow by blow account" he proceeds to liken the Russian poet to Baudelaire's dandy and Camus' *L'Homme Revolté*. The rebel Lermontov, "notorious for blasphemy and satanism," has preeminently the gift of "masculine strength" which Mr. Daniels suprisingly but fortunately describes as an "unending, powerful seeking for truth."

This introduction seems to be influenced by Lermontov's own youthful, fervent, "frenetique" language. The strength of the poet is overemphasized while the other side of the picture—the swaggering, bullying, whining, as well as Lermontov's tenderness and mysticism—is glossed over. Mr. Daniels follows Lermontov in attacking Pushkin as lacking the courage "to speak out," forgetting that Lermontov himself after speaking out, more than once turned to his influential grandmother and relatives for help in mollifying the government. Lermontov is not always the Prometheus that he would like to be, but rather one of the other giants like Cacus or those in Guilo Romano's *Cadute*. Mr. Daniels, also in an attempt to make his subject vital and contemporary, occasionally falls into such expressions as: "there was a close symbiosis between poetry and politics" or even: "the analyzable facts are that *some* of a poet's works are totally refractory to, say, englishing . . ."

But in his analysis and his translations he does justice to the greatness of Lermontov as the seeker after truth admired by Tolstoy and the asker of "accursed questions," the prototype of Dostoyevsky's heroes. "Why am I so troubled and so heartsick?" asks the poet in one of the translations, ". . . Peace and freedom—these are what I long for/I'd like just to forget myself and fall into a sleep," a live sleep like that of Keats on the breast of his beloved (*Bright Star*). Something of the

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vitality that fascinated Yevtushenko and of the "melody" that haunted the Russian emigré poet Ivanov has been made available in Mr. Daniel's interesting anthology.

The Modern Writer and His World

G. S. FRASER

Praeger, $7.50

BERNARD BERGONZI

A recent feature of the English literary scene has been a large-scale movement by Eng. Lit. academics into the territory of reviewing and literary journalism. Mr. Fraser is an unusual example of a reverse tendency: a well-known poet and critic, he spent many years as a professional literary journalist in London before entering the academic world in 1958; he is now Reader in English at the University of Leicester. In its original form, *The Modern Writer and His World* consisted of lectures on modern British literature delivered on a cultural assignment in Japan in 1950; these were then revised for the first British edition in 1953, which, in turn, has been completely rewritten for the present edition. Mr. Fraser's aim has been to provide a general prospect of the twentieth century literary scene, covering the main literary forms, up to the late 1950's; and he has in mind, not an academic or professional reader, but, say, an adult education student, who is alert and intelligent but not deeply informed about modern literature. For such a reader, it seems to me, Mr. Fraser's book could be extremely helpful; which is not to say that it is a totally satisfactory performance.

The problem is, of course, that literary history, just as much as art history and the history of ideas, is desirable and necessary: but the problems of writing it well are formidable. The notion of the "map" of a period, with which Mr. Fraser compares his undertaking, is an attractive one; but the features of a literary landscape are so much less assuredly and objectively *there* than the rivers, hills and roads

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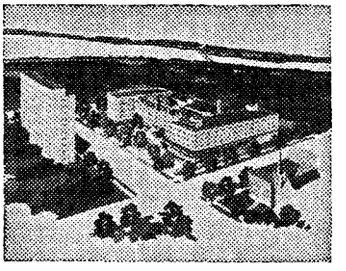

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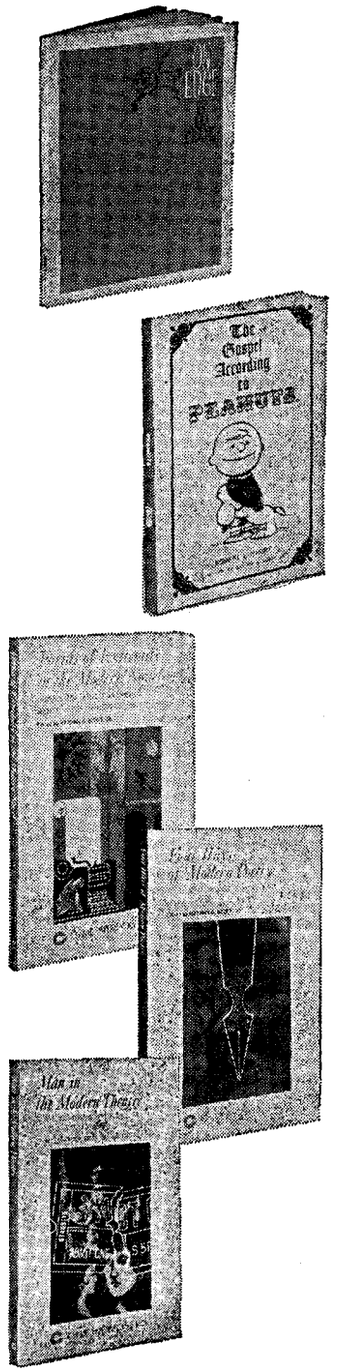
f an actual piece of countryside. The urther back in time one goes, the easier he task becomes; even so, a map of the eventeenth-century literary landscape night even now involve some heated arguments about the respective dimensions of Mt. Donne and Mt. Milton. And in the twentieth century the uncertainties are far greater.

It is fairly generally agreed, for instance, that *The Waste Land* is a central document of modern literature; but what should the would-be cartographer do about Mr. Graham Hough's recent energetic attempt to dislodge it? And how does the reader interpret blank patches on the map? There is a disconcerting example in Mr. Fraser's book; although he gives a full and wide-ranging discussion of the development of the twentieth-century British novel, there is not the slightest reference to Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* (he does mention Ford in a passing way in other contexts), which seem to me among the unquestioned masterpieces of modern English fiction. Is this because, incredibly, Mr. Fraser, after due consideration, came to the conclusion that Ford's novels were so critically negligible that they could be ignored? Or because he hadn't ever got around to reading them? We all have gaps in our private reading: the real danger is that they may get projected onto maps intended for public use.

Still, in general, Mr. Fraser's reading is wide, eclectic and relevantly brought into play. He has the experienced expositor's habit of deft and easy, but sometimes dangerous, generalization. It is tempting, for instance, to discuss recent British poetry under such useful labels—which become even more handy in the classroom—as the "Movement" and the "Group"; but this hardly does justice to the various individual and differing qualities of the poets concerned. A salutary, if bleak, injunction for all literary expositors, including teachers, reviewers, and writers of popularizing histories, would be: "To Relate is to Distort." (Intended as a brake or warning, only; without *some* relation there can be no discussion).

Mr. Fraser's rapidity of mind, and his ability to pinpoint neatly the essence of a situation, can produce some urbane and effective aphoristic writing, the quality of which can best be shown by quotations. As, for instance, when he remarks in a discussion of Forster: "British democracy, in so far as it exists, is much more the effect of the sense of fairness of the British upper and mandarin classes than of really efficient pressures from below." It is one of Mr. Fraser's strengths that he is interested in other things as well as literature: his literary judgments often indicate the presence of an intelligent and informed interest in politics, history and philosophy.

Here are some more of Mr. Fraser's sensitive but accurate characterizations.



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On Angus Wilson: "His liberalism consists of a painful checking back of the impulse to condemn, rather than of a spontaneous sympathy with the sheer variety of the human world; he does not see virtue as leading to happiness, and indeed happiness, I think, is something he rather dislikes, associating it with self-centeredness and insensitive complacency." On Oscar Wilde Mr. Fraser is brilliantly suggestive, speaking of Wilde in his comedies making "his own contribution towards Victorian dream- or child-literature, like *Alice in Wonderland*, to create a world of innocent libido, where lust is expressed in a greed for cucumber sandwiches, and where children are born, not under gooseberry bushes, but in Gladstone bags. Lady Bracknell, too, is somewhere between the Queen and the Duchess in Alice." And, as a final example, here is Fraser on William Empson: "The distinctively, sometimes disturbingly individual note of Empson's poetry is the way in which a hearty and jovial tone, as of convivial masculine humour, is laid on top of a statement, or vibration of feeling, that could result in a scream of rage or fear."

This is not a fashionable way of writing criticism, but when it succeeds, I think it is a valid one. Such formulations can often say more about the essence of a writer than many labored attempts at explication. In fact, in the 1940's and early 50's Mr. Fraser was a pioneer of rigorous Empsonian criticism, and his contribution, "On the Interpretation of the Difficult Poem," to John Wain's symposium, *Interpretations*, remains as evidence of his skill in applying the method. More recently, however, he has turned, as these extracts from *The Modern Writer and His*

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REVIEWERS

WILSON CAREY MC WILLIAMS *is co-author of* Crisis and Continuity in World Politics.

JOHN GERASSI *is Art Editor at* Newsweek.

ARCADI NEBOLSINE, *a previous contributor, is an instructor in Russian Literature.*

BERNARD BERGONZI *is the author of the forthcoming book,* Heroes' Twilight.

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World may suggest, to a belles-lettrist manner that operates by suggestion rather than close analysis.

Inevitably one recalls the characteristic approach of the major Victorian critics, whom Mr. Fraser consistently refers to with respect and admiration. Like them he shows a breadth and humanity of outlook; he acknowledges the public terror of our times but refuses to be thrown off balance by it. He manifests a liberal but not radical cast of mind: indeed, one of the few openly acerb passages in his book is when he attacks the glum and wilful egalitarianism associated with the English New Left group.

Mr. Fraser's approach, as I have implied, is hit-and-miss: the misses are often distressing, but the hits are palpable and illuminating, and there are enough of them to justify his book. If literature is not to pass entirely into the hands of the professionals, trapped in the squirrel-cage of the graduate school, we shall need more books of this kind.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 5*)

rible, un-Biblical expression), flow.

As for my "two problems" mentioned at the end of Father Wroblewski's letter, first, I can stand *some* dualism, but not all the dualisms which popular Catholicism has bequeathed to me. The dualism of creator and creature seems to me perfectly valid, as does that of Savior and saved, grace and free will and Old Adam and New Adam. But I do have serious reservations about setting up a dualism between "this age and the age to come." These reservations spring from my belief that the Kingdom of God has *already commenced*, though still yet to be brought to fulfillment. This is not a very novel opinion since the *Constitution on the Church* says the same thing. Any sharp distinction between the *now* and the *then* seems to me neglectful of Christ's redemption, which has already taken place. Similarly, I think the setting up of a dualism between spirit and flesh runs into similar difficulties unless one carefully narrows the meaning of "flesh." The fact that Christ has *already* redeemed matter and flesh means that spirit impenetrates matter and flesh; to talk the language of dualism here seems to me to wholly obscure what has taken place because of Christ.

Second, I most unequivocally want modern man to listen to the Kerygma and I think it essential that we *try* to talk about it in the terms of secular man. Again, this is hardly a very novel desire: Pope John called on the Church to do just that at the beginning of Vatican II. Whether this can be done "successfully," I don't know—that is where Christian hope must come in. But the word "successful" is Father Wroblewski's, not mine. I think it wholly gratuitous on his part to assume that the desire to find ways of conveying the Kerygma in terms comprehensible to modern man is nothing but a cheap attempt to achieve "success."

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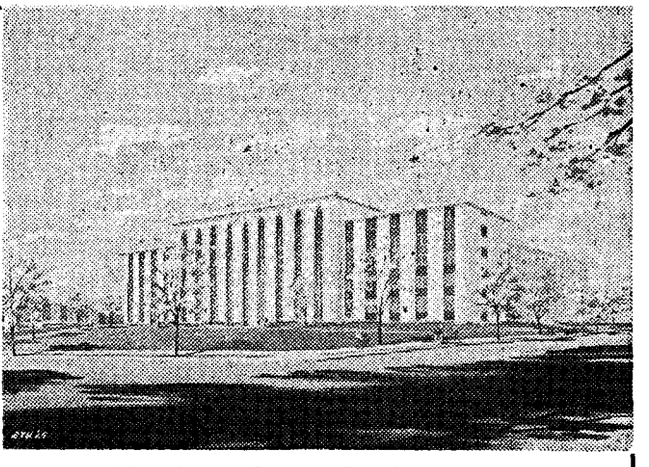

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As a final note, I don't think Cox's "demythologized Christianity . . . is tantamount to a denial of the hereafter and hardly distinguishable from atheistic humanitarianism." Cox does not speak of the "hereafter" one way or another and I see no basis for asserting he would deny it. At any rate, his position is sharply distinguishable from "atheistic humanitarianism" in numerous respects. To mention only a few: (a) he affirms that "God and God alone brings in the Kingdom"; (b) he distinguishes between "the biblical doctrine of the hiddenness of God" (which he accepts) and "contemporary atheism or, better, nontheism" (which he does not accept); (c) he takes much trouble to show the difference between "secularization" and "secularism." The latter he rejects precisely because it is a closed system which resolutely denies the possibility of God or religious truth. As I tried to point out in my article, there are many difficulties with Cox's position, but I don't think they lie in the direction suggested by Father Wroblewski.

DANIEL CALLAHAN

"Bravo . . ."

Boston, Mass.

To the Editors: Bravo to Daniel Callahan for his robust and encouraging critique of Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* [Sept. 17], which evolved into a luminous dialogue with the author whose "Beyond Bonhoeffer" immediately preceded. . . .

When St. Paul reminded the Athenians that "God is not far from anyone of us," and that "in Him we live and move and have our being," he was not placing this all-sustaining Presence in some Platonic order of transcendence, but in that same intractable, gritty, workaday order of milieux of which he himself was a willing captive. If Christian love of God must seek its tangible nurture in the sweaty, cantankerous neighbor with his clinically tattered psyche, it would ill-befit Christian faith to take contemplative flight from Teilhard's clotted spade or the drab and inexorable statistics of economics and sociology. It is not without meaning that perhaps St. Paul's most relevant epistle, Romans, might be dubbed a grand manifesto to The Secular City.

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(REV.) THOMAS A. FOX, C.S.P.

Jesuit Concern

WESTON, MASS.

To the Editors: Father Richard Butler's statement in "The End of the Newman 'Club'" [Sept. 31], that "the Jesuits, heavily committed to their own schools, are pretty much limited to a few 'teaching-in' situations which do not make administrative demands on them," may give the impression that American Jesuits are not interested in the enormous challenge posed to the American Church by the secular campus and that decisions have already been made against Jesuit involvement in the future.

Such is not the case. To cite some examples of Jesuit concern: A conference on the Society of Jesus and higher education in America held at Woodstock, Md., last October, with leading Jesuit educators attending, devoted a great share of its time to Jesuits and the secular college and university. The major seminaries at Woodstock and at Weston, Mass., run pastoral programs in which theology students regularly assist the Newman chaplains of surrounding colleges. The possibilities of Jesuit involvement are discussed continually among American Jesuits and even came up for discussion in the Jesuits' General Congregation meeting in Rome this year.

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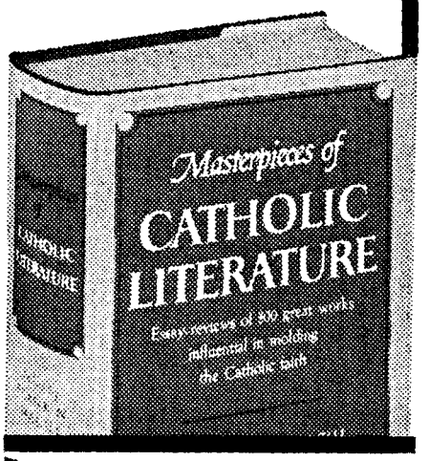

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